

TS-4K 695-3

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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URGENT INFORMATION  
June 8, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

SUBJECT: My Staff's Contacts with CIA on the NIEs

You have inquired about the activities of my staff at a recent meeting on the NIEs with people from CIA.

I think my staff has acted correctly and carefully. Here are the facts:

My staff was invited (three times) by CIA to discuss the NIE and the principal discussion was in line with analysis already implicitly approved by you.

In my memorandum to you of February 5 on NIE 11-8-70, I informed you my staff would work directly with CIA to insure that future NIEs would include discussions of broader, non-hardware issues, such as Soviet command and control and the Soviet perception of the U.S. threat. (See page 8 of Tab A.) This would be one of the many ways we could work to obtain further improvements. Also, in my memo to NIE 11-3, which was subsequent to the meeting, I informed you my staff had met with CIA to get them thinking along the lines I believed you would want to raise with Helms. (See page 4 of Tab B.)

After my memo to you on NIE 11-8 (and after the President had sent his congratulatory letter to Helms), members of my staff (Jack Merritt and Barry Carter) accepted an invitation from CIA to discuss the NIEs. This discussion was undertaken considering:

-- You had already indicated on my memo on NIE 11-8-70 that you wanted to meet with Helms to discuss further improvements in the NIEs. A staff meeting prior to your meeting would help sharpen the issues. It would also unearth some new questions on format which CIA was concerned about.

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-- As for choosing the substantive areas to probe, we already had substantial guidance from you. There was your favorable reaction to the ideas in my memos to you and for the President on NIE 11-8. Finally, you had specifically expressed interest in better analysis on the Soviet perception of the U.S. threat and on Soviet command and control. (See Tab C.)

Merritt and Carter met with five people from CIA at CIA headquarters on April 27 for about 1 1/2 hours. The CIA people were from the Board of National Estimates (BNE), the Office of National Estimates (ONE), and the Office of Strategic Research.

Nothing unusual occurred at the meeting. (Merritt's and Carter's Talking Points are at Tab D.)

1. Merritt and Carter reiterated the view that NIE 11-8 and 11-3 (which had been received before the meeting) were substantial improvements over past efforts.

2. They related how they found the new documents very useful sources of information for their work on SALT and strategic forces.

3. In probing to determine the chances of improvements in specific substantive areas and to encourage such efforts, they adhered closely to the areas where you have provided some guidance:

-- More discussion of the strategic consequences of physical observations. (A chronic problem noted explicitly in my memo to you and for the President on NIE 11-8. See Tab A.)

-- More use of varied analytical techniques, such as political and institutional analysis. (See memos on NIE 11-8 at Tab A and on Soviet perception of U.S. threat at Tab C.)

-- More efforts to estimate Soviet objectives and strategies and Soviet command and control. (See your memos at Tab C as well as the memos on NIE 11-8.)

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4. Merritt and Carter discussed the format of future NIEs, in response to a question from the CIA group. They did tell CIA that one suggested option -- a Memo to Holders -- was inadequate as the standard format for all NIEs. A Memo to Holders would involve updating specific facts on an irregular basis, but an overall rewrite only every two years. This seemed to be a lazy approach since general issues are often as important as specific facts. CIA had apparently reached this conclusion already.

5. The CIA personnel raised for the first time a new schedule for next year's NIEs. DOD had been seeking to speed up the NIE schedule and to change the order on the grounds that this would better assist the DOD budget process. CIA pointed out that some of the better photography and other information is obtained in the summer and an accelerated NIE schedule might not allow time for this new information to be adequately digested.

Merritt and Carter dodged this potential interagency squabble on the valid grounds that they were not familiar with the issues. They ventured only that it was very important to maintain or improve the quality of the NIEs.

The meeting ended on a congenial note.

I do not know what caused the question or comment to you on this meeting. It could result from the internal struggle in CIA between BNE/ONE, which had much greater control in the past over the NIEs, and the Deputy Directors for Intelligence (DDI) and for Science and Technology (DDS&T). (See pages 3-5 of Tab A.) Someone might have felt the other side had benefitted from the meeting and cried "foul"; the person reporting to you was simply trying to push the internal CIA battle onto our shoulders. My staff was very careful not to get into the internal bureaucratic issues at CIA. In fact, when [redacted] 25X1 (of ONE/BNE) made his invitation, we specifically asked that Bob Hewitt (of DDI) join the group as well.

Another possible reason would be that CIA is simply counterattacking for my work on reorganization of the intelligence community.

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In any event, if you think my staff or I have acted unwisely I would appreciate knowing about it directly, so I can know what, if any, corrective actions to take. As I have described above, I believe matters were handled well and cautiously and in line with your desires. There is no way I can effectively carry out my responsibilities if I and my staff are unable to deal directly with CIA and the rest of the agencies on the issues that we are working on. I am distressed about the complaint because I believe it is unwarranted. I would be even more distressed if I thought you took it seriously.

*Wayne - it is unimportant  
Your jump is essential  
- I am just trying to protect  
it from surprise.*

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